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## SANDERS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT #18

March 13, 2020

Dear Family Members,

With the daily headlines about the **Coronavirus (COVID-19)**, you may have questions about this global outbreak and how the District is responding.

### What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness caused by a novel (new) virus that we are learning more about every day. There is currently no vaccine to protect against COVID-19. Cases of COVID-19 have been found on every continent except Antarctica, and it continues to spread. In the United States, there are less than 100 confirmed cases and the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC) indicates that currently, public risk remains low. The virus poses the greatest risk to people over 60 or those with preconditions like a compromised immune system or respiratory illnesses. At this time, only one case has been confirmed in Arizona.

### What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

While outbreak is concerning, there are other respiratory viruses like influenza currently circulating in our schools that have the same symptoms as COVID-19. Fever, coughing, and difficulty breathing are symptoms associated with all of them. Therefore, anyone exhibiting these symptoms should not be assumed to have COVID-19.

### How can I protect my student?

Because COVID-19 is a virus, this is a good time to review preventative measures that we can all take to avoid the spread of any respiratory virus.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water. Handwashing strategies include washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick and keep sick children home as well.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue and then immediately discard the tissues. If no tissues are available, cough or sneeze into your elbow or other article of clothing.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

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Arnold Goodluck  
Board President

Duane Noggle  
Board Clerk

Marlene Apachee  
Board Member

Anita Watchman  
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Daisy Slim  
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### What is the District doing to respond to COVID-19?

We are taking precautions inside of our schools in order to provide a healthy learning environment for our students. These precautions include disinfecting surfaces that are used by students on a regular basis.

### Is it possible that the District will close schools?

The District will closely monitor this question with Arizona Department of Health Services (AZDHS). AZDHS takes the following into account when considering school closures: the severity of disease, benefits to public health, impact on student learning, families, childcare, school staff, and the economy.

Other important points to keep in mind regarding the possibility of school closures:

- Because most people with COVID-19 have mild disease, the likelihood that AZDHS will recommend closing schools is extremely low, but not zero. At this time, school closures are not recommended.
- AZDHS will notify schools prior to recommending closure.
- Closing schools is not always the most effective strategy to slow disease transmission, particularly if children congregate outside of school.

Additional information on COVID-19 can be obtained at this website: <https://www.cdc.gov/>

As we receive updates that affect our school community, we will pass them along to you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Kim J. Pearce'.

Kim J. Pearce  
Superintendent  
Sanders Unified School District

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